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Title: Need to formulate rehabilitation policy for hawkers in Railways.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY (JADAVPUR): Sir, this relates to the general problem of hawkers in the Railways. You know that it is a very big problem. In many parts of the country, hawkers are serving the railway passengers, particularly in the trains where pantry car is not there and passengers have to travel for three to four hours. They are even serving the food, milk to children and water to old people etc. There is some necessity for these hawkers not only from the point of view of their livelihood but from the point of view of passenger amenities as well.

At the platform, passengers have to wait for hours together. These hawkers are supporting the passengers in a sense that sometimes, they can provide security also to the passengers because it is not possible that the policemen will be guarding all the platforms at the stations. So, there was a question of permit or license to be given to them and the hon. Minister was also kind enough to arrange for that. He had proposed that a pilot project should be developed in the Eastern Railway, but up till now that has not been made.

In the Railway Act, it is stated that unauthorised hawking or begging is not permitted. I do not know how authorisation of begging can be done; authorisation of hawking can be done. Since there is no policy framework in this regard, there is no question of authorisation and thereby, all are unauthorised. I would request that a proper policy must be framed so that authorisation can be properly done. In the absence of this, there is heavy repression on a good number of people, the poor people. A continuous repression has been going on. In order to stop it and check it, and considering that they are serving the passengers as well as taking into account the question of their livelihood – all these things together – a policy should be framed so that the Act can be properly implemented with authorisation, permit and licence to the hawkers.

With this request, I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri P.C. Thomas. You can raise only one matter.